



A BRIEF HISTORY OF WASATCH COUNTY
FROM ITS SETTLEMENT
AND ESPECIALLY OF HEBER CITY.

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A brief history of wasatch county from its settlement
and especially of Heber City.

Much of the early history is taken from the journal of John Crook who was one of the original band of Pioneer settlers and was one of the 17 men who with their families wintered here in 1859, called at that time Provo Valley.

He says, "In the winter of 1858 a meeting was held in Provo by men who had no land and who desired to venture making new homes in that high cold climate where it was claimed there was frost every month of the year."

President Young's advice was to settle wherever possible to raise crops of grain hay and vegetables to sustain life. But to be sure to organize and go in parties sufficiently numerous to defend themselves from attacks of the Indians.

It was known that the land here was good and water plentiful. But they had no proof that wheat could be matured, but these men had faith to believe that with the blessings of the Lord they would succeed and they were ready and willing to make the attempt as early as possible in the spring of 1859.

There were a few men who had wintered stock in the valley a year or two before this Wm M. Wall, Wm Meeks, Wm Cummings and (Robert) Parker but they were all very doubtful about raising wheat in this climate. Charles Shelton and Alex Wilkins are also said to have a ranch house. All these were in what is now the Charleston ward where they could cut grass on the river bottoms.

Provo valley had been used as a summer herd ground for the people of Provo and vicinity for a number of years. The land

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in what was later called the North field had been surveyed by local men late in 1858 and early in 1859 into ten, twenty and forty acre plots so that land claims could be established. The cost of the surveying was the only expense for the land at that time.

The men who attended the meeting in Provo in 1858 appointed Wm Meeks to be their leader when they would come up to the valley in the following spring and that all would make preparations for making a start as early as possible, bringing their wives and children, cows, pigs, chickens as well as plows, harrows and furniture with the avowed intention of making their future homes here if the Lord would bless them in their labors and temper the elements for their sakes, and make it possible for them to mature crops to sustain themselves and their families.

The spring of 1859 however was late so it was the last day of April when a small company of ten men with 3 wagons and oxen for teams left Provo to come up Provo Canyon into this valley to make a start and prove whether or not they would be successful in raising those things needful to support life and make comfortable homes for their families. These men were Thomas Rastband, John Crook, Charles N. Carroll, John Carlile, John Jordan, Henry Chatwin, Jesse Bond, James Carlile, Wm Giles Jr., and a man named Carpenter, also Geo. Carlile.

They had a very bad road and several snowslides to pass over in Provo Canyon. In fact they had to uncouple the wagons in some places and take them over the snowslides in separate parts, which made very hard work for the men and their ox teams. It was the third day when they reached the open valley and to their surprise they found 2 men plowing and who had been plowing for 2 days. Their names were James Davis and Robert

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Broadhead they had 2 yoke of oxen for a team. Two other men had also plowed a day or two on Center Creek they were Robert Parker and Wm. Cummings with ox teams also. This little company went on to a spring one mile north of where the city of Heber now stands and made their camp as this was near to what they considered the best land in the valley. This land was covered with short grass while the greatest part of the valley was covered with sage brush. In some places very thick and hard to clear. As their camp was the largest in the valley and most of them were from England they called it London and the spring still retains that name. They each made their claims to 20 to 40 acres of the land and went to work in earnest plowing and sowing with hope and faith that they would reap a harvest in the fall. While getting their crops planted they camped near the spring in their tents and wagons.

A town site had also been surveyed and as soon as possible they began to build log cabins and prepare for winter. They decided to build close together in a Fort shape so as to be able to protect themselves from the Indians if need be. The north west corner of the town site was selected as the place to build the fort which at first was 2 blocks long and 2 blocks wide. The houses were close together with openings to let their stock in and out and that could be closed when necessary. The houses were nearly all built with green cottonwood logs cut on the river bottoms. They were all kept very busy raising their crops and building homes where they could be fairly comfortable in the cold winter months that they knew was sure to come. When they would be shut out from the rest of the world for months. When they got their log nuts prepared they brought

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Brovo their wives and children to their new homes to share in their broubles and trails.

Their first wheat crop was injured some by the frosts but still could be made into flour and they were not discouraged. However they had to go to Provo to a grist mill and with ox teams, bad roads that took 4 days. So much of the wheat had to ground in coffee mills or boiled and eaten whole with milk.

Most of the families had one or more cows. One of the hardest jobs these men had to do was to provide hay for their oxen and cows during the winter months. The only grass ~~they~~ could get grew in wet swampy places and all had to be cut by hand with a scythe which wasthe very hardest kind of work.

There was quite a number of men who came and raised crops and built houses that summer but went back to Brovo for the winter rather than provide hay for their cattle during the long winter and to be shut out from the rest of the world for months. The names of those who with their families stayed in the valley in the winter of 1859 are. Thomas Rasband, John Crook, C.N. Carrol, John Carlile, John Jordan, Alex Sessions, Bradford Sessions, John Sessions, Hyrum Oakes, John Lee, Richard Jones, James Davis, Wm Davidson, James Laird, Elisha Thomas, James Carlile, and Jane Clotworthy, a widow, Charles C. Thomas then single lived with his brother Elisha. Jesse Bond and Robert Broadhead then single went to Brovo as did quite a number of others. John Carlile got seriously hurt while crossing the Provo river in June 1859 and he died in October 1859 being the first grown person to die ⁱⁿ the the valley. A child of Sariah Cook's had died in June 1859 being the first death among the settlers here.

David Wood was the first man to plow on the West side of the Provo river in this valley. Others besides him raised small crops but all went back to the lower vallies for the winter. Those who lived in the fort in the Northwest corner of what we now call Heber were the only ones who wintered here in 1859, according to John Crooks notes and as far as known he was the only man in the valley at that time who took note of the weather and other conditions in those early days.

Quite a number of men who came into the valley in 1859 and secured land and some who even built log cabins never came back having become discouraged for some cause.

Elias Cox and John Hamilton are given credit for building the first houses in the fort. The first white child born in the valley was Timpanogos Davidson, daughter of Wm. and Ellen Davidson. And the first child born in the fort was Sarah Crook daughter of John and Mary Giles Crook.

The first winter in the valley was a long and dreary one for those who remained. The snow fell early and deep and for some 3 or 4 months they were entirely without communication with the rest of the world. However they had their little meetings on the Sabbath day and at other times and in their simple sincere way tried to cheer and encourage each other as best they could.

It is related that near the end of March 1860 the snow was still deep and no signs of spring and some were getting discouraged. They held a meeting in John Lee's house and during the meeting they prayed sincerely and earnestly that the Lord would hear their prayers and cause the snow to pass away very soon and the spring time come that their famished oxen and cows might get grass to eat and that they themselves could again get in touch with their friends in the lower vallies. Before

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the meeting was dismissed water was dripping from the eaves of the house and they all felt sure their prayers had been heard and answered.

In the spring of 1860 quite a large number of new people came to make their homes in the new valley. They had heard that grain crops had been raised here the year before and that good land and water to irrigate it was plentiful and cheap. They were anxious to secure land and make themselves homes while there was such a good chance to do this. Wm. Meeks who had been chosen as their leader before they left Provo never made a real home in the valley. So early in 1860 Wm M. Wall was appointed presiding Elder and he chose John M. Murdoch and James Laird as counselors. At that time there were some 200 people here making homes and putting in crops. Early in July they began to talk about celebrating the 24th and some suggested building a bowery for that purpose but John M. Murdoch said he would suggest that they build a meeting house that would answer that purpose and also as a school house and dance hall also for theatres, and all kinds of gatherings. This suggestion was heartily approved and all hands went to work with a will and had it ready for their 24th celebration and answered all purposes for some years. It was 20 by 40 feet with a large open fire place and chimney in each end big enough to take in wood 3 to 4 feet long.

About this time they decided to call their little town Heber in honor of Heber C. Kimball who at that time was first counselor to President Brigham Young.

In 1860 the greater part of the north field was put under cultivation and fairly good crops raised, the wheat however was

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somewhat shrunken by the early frosts but still could be used to make flour. The first threshing machine was brought here by Smith and Bullock it was small and thresed very slowly using horses for power. The grain afterwards had to be run through a fanning mill to separate the wheat from the chaff and that was turned by hand which made threshing a very slow process. Some of the grain did not get threshed before winter set in. By this time most of the land in the north field being claimed it was necessary to fence it in to protect their crops as oxen and cows had to find their feed on the ranged during the summer. An estimate was made and it was found that a rod of fence for each acre of land was required to enclose the field and each person was required to build fence accordingly. In this way the field was enclosed fence viewers were voted in as officers under the law to compile people if need be to make and keep in repair a lawful fence.

People who could not take their wheat to a Provo gristmill were still grinding wheat in coffee mills or boiling it and eating it whole with milk. These were busy days for everybody, making roads into the canyons to get poles to make fences, to get logs to build houses, stables, barns to shelter their stock through the cold winter months and provide hay for the oxen and cows who were so necessary to help make their living.

The first marriage in the valley occurred on Christmas day 1860. When Charles C. Thomas and Emmeline Sessions were married by Thomas Rasband. Another couple were married in the evening of that day at Center creek by Silas Smith, they were Harvey ^{Dougal?} weeks and a Miss Doudal. The following winter was not so lonely

Address Jane
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